



Max & Dizzy Gillespie

*WMJS: Jazz encompasses a lot of different genres. Which types of jazz do you play and listen to?*

MAX III: I'm down-hearted swing guy! I love to swing! That's my upbringing. If I could choose anything, I'd play swingin' blues all night long.

*WMJS: In what ways have you witnessed and helped further the evolution of jazz?*

MAX III: Obviously through education. This is a music that has been passed down from generation to generation. That's how we learn this music! So I'm very, very fortunate to be involved with a couple of music programs. I have about 45 students of my own and I play Louis Armstrong records for them. First, you have to expose kids to it because they are not going to be exposed to it in public now, unlike how it used to be. And when kids are exposed to it, they love it!

*WMJS: So what's a typical "day in the life" of Max Colley?*

MAX III: I drive to Holland every other Friday. I am teaching at Hope College DeWitt Theater right now, so I get up at about 5AM

and drive there, and come back by 12:30 to work with some groups in Byron Center until after school. Monday through Thursday it is basically 3PM to 9PM; I teach private 30 minute lessons with 45 students. Sometimes there are gigs after that. So it's always something!

*WMJS: Your family seems very close. Why do you think that is?*

MAX III: It was probably my dad. He fostered a love for us kids. I have a beautiful family, I really do. We are all tight and talk to each other every week. The nephews and nieces keep us together too.

*WMJS: Just what is jazz education? Why is it important?*

MAX III: Now that's really easy. For jazz education, the best thing is to check out the music, be exposed to it and listen to it. I always make a distinction between listening and hearing. For example, you need to listen to Louis Armstrong's attack and you need to listen to how he played his vibrato. We start with very basic concepts in some of the classes that I work with. We get them in the frame of mind of listening by taking them outside and having them write down everything they hear. Whether it is chirping birds or trucks on the street, being exposed to sounds, and being observant of what you're hearing is the best thing. Teaching somebody how to listen develops a life skill.

*WMJS: What other hobbies and interests do you have?*

MAX III: My eight nieces and nephews. I love them, and try to see them as much as I can. I also like to read and hike. I like hanging with people. I am shy in my natural personality so being in front of kids and audiences has helped me a lot. I used to get sick every time before I played.

*WMJS: Tell us a little about your performance and how much of your time you spend doing that.*

MAX III: When I do a performance, I try not to just do the Real Book tunes. A Real Book is a collection of standard tunes, which I love, but I've always been a dreamer, so I envision doing more obscure tunes. I don't like my playing. You are always your own worst critic and that's really true. Of all the concerts I've played, I can count on one hand the ones I liked. I enjoy improving!

*WMJS: If you had to pick a highlight in your career...*